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RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2612
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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0413
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0594
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0044
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 001860

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DEPT FOR SES-O
DEPT FOR SCA/PB, SCA/EX
DCHA/OFDA FOR ROBERT THAYER
AID/W FOR AA MARK WARD AND ANE ANNE DIX
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KATHMANDU FOR USAID OFDA BILL BERGER AND SUE MCINTYRE
TREASURY FOR ELIZABETH WEISS AND SUSAN CHUN

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMGT](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [EAGR](#) [SENV](#)
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SUBJECT: USAID/OFDA Cyclone Sidr Situation Report #6: Summary of Initial Sector Cluster Meetings in Dhaka

REF: (A) DHAKA 1835; (B) DHAKA 1838

11. Summary. The impact of Tropical Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh has led to 3,243 deaths, affected more than 7 million people, and damaged more than 1.2 million homes, according to the Government of Bangladesh's (GOB) Disaster Management Bureau and the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) as of November 26. Members of USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART), along with USAID/Bangladesh, the U.S. military, other donors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are attending sector cluster meetings in Dhaka to discuss humanitarian priorities, engage with GOB officials, coordinate response mechanisms, and share information on relief activities and field assessments. Representatives of the U.S. Government will continue to attend cluster meetings in the coming days. Along with information gathered from field assessments, the USAID/DART will draw on information shared at cluster meetings to identify priority needs as well as gaps in humanitarian assistance where USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance could provide additional support. End Summary.

USAID/DART AND USAID/BANGLADESH ATTEND SECTOR CLUSTER MEETINGS

12. On November 25, the USAID/DART and USAID/Bangladesh attended the first food cluster meeting, which was chaired by WFP. Although GOB officials were absent, this meeting served as an opportunity for international donors and operational partners to discuss the food security situation and coordinate relief efforts. To address the

food needs of affected populations, the GOB will expand its existing vulnerable group feeding (VGF) program to target an estimated 2.6 million households in 30 districts. Through the VGF program, the GOB will distribute 15 kilograms of rice per month to affected households. The GOB may expand the number of households under the VGF program. At the cluster meeting, WFP announced its emergency operation targeting 2.2 million beneficiaries in Barisal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Khulna, and Satkhira districts, as per reftel (A). In addition, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will commence a comprehensive food and livelihoods assessment on December 3 to determine the impact of the cyclone on agricultural production, fisheries, and forestry. Furthermore, FAO plans to provide comprehensive recommendation for livelihoods assistance and recovery.

13. On November 25, USAID/Bangladesh attended the water, sanitation, and hygiene cluster meeting, chaired by the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF). The GOB's Department of Public Health Engineering is coordinating government response to water, sanitation, and hygiene needs arising from Cyclone Sidr. Participants discussed various measures to meet immediate and long-term water, sanitation, and hygiene needs of affected populations, including chlorination of existing wells, cleaning of open water sources, hygiene promotion, provision of water treatment tablets to affected households, and rehabilitation of sanitation infrastructure destroyed by the cyclone. While UNICEF highlighted that water needs and appropriate responses vary from locality to locality, coordination efforts are integral in gathering information and identifying prevalent gaps.

14. As per reftel (B), the USAID/DART and USAID/Bangladesh attended the first health cluster meeting on November 25, where the U.N. World Health Organization, the GOB, and NGOs did not report

DHAKA 00001860 002 OF 002

significant gaps in health services. The USAID/DART also discussed the current health situation with Mdecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), which is conducting assessments of affected areas in Bhada, Bhola, and Barguna districts. MSF has observed no significant emergency health needs in these areas, but will continue to monitor conditions. To date, MSF has distributed 5,000 hygiene kits to mitigate the adverse impact of the cyclone on public health.

15. The International Federation of the Red Cross is leading the emergency shelter cluster. The first meeting took place on November 25 and the next one will occur on November 28. Currently, the cluster is developing a low-cost shelter design intended to standardize shelter interventions throughout cyclone-affected areas. The cluster expects to finalize this design within the next 10 days, drawing on the most up to date information from ongoing field assessments.

16. On November 26, the USAID/DART, USAID/Bangladesh, and U.S. Marine logistics attended the first meeting of the interagency Logistics Response Team (LRT), chaired by WFP. The LRT is in essence functioning as the logistics cluster, as a full cluster has not been activated at present. Overall, partners reported that no apparent logistical constraints or significant gaps exist at this time. This account might be attributed in part to the success of previous and ongoing USAID programs in disaster preparedness and mitigation. However, humanitarian organizations face challenges in finding sufficient warehouse space both in Dhaka and cyclone-affected areas in the south. WFP is transporting approximately 20 metric tons of high energy biscuits to affected areas using Bangladesh military helicopters. No GOB representatives, either from the military or the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, were present at this meeting. As a result, this meeting did not address the status of government efforts to transport GOB relief commodities.

17. On November 26, the USAID/DART and USAID/Bangladesh attended an information management and coordination meeting, chaired by WFP. The head of the GOB's Comprehensive Disaster Management Program outlined how the government obtains information and posts daily situation reports on its public website, located at www.cdmp.org.bd. In addition, participants discussed how to design user-friendly websites that could improve information dissemination among the various humanitarian responders. To enhance information management

and coordination during the Cyclone Sidr response, a sub-group of technical specialists will work to further refine the current websites.

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